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Resources for Building a Homestead Root Cellar

By **ASHLEY ADAMANT** Updated May 09, 2025

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I dream of one day having a real root cellar. Not just for the romantic notion of a simpler time, but for practical reasons.

It just makes sense. Storing a winter's worth of fresh, homegrown food without using any electricity would give us an extra leg up towards self-reliance, and keep our costs down at the same time.

We already do quite a bit of impromptu root cellaring. Our storage method for apples works really well, and we've kept app
without refrigeration. Apples are the exceptio
success with other types of produce.

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I've decided that this winter I'm going to start planning ours, reading up on building plans and practices. I already did the preserve a whole pig without refrigeration, nov put that tasty pile of charcuterie.

While I'm doing my research, it only makes sen and share it with you all.

Homestead root cellar. Photo courtesy of Teri Page at Homestead Honey.

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EXPAND TO VIEW AI

Root Cellaring: Natura of Fruits & Vegetables

Root Cellaring by Mike and Nancy Bubel is one of the most comprehensive books on root cellaring, with specific instructions on how to root cellar just

about every type of vegetable. This is my “go-to” book when I’m looking for the specifics of how to keep things fresh in our current basement root cellar. The book also includes ideas on how to root cellar in apartments and suburban areas.

While this is the perfect go-to handbook for modifying spaces in your current home, the one thing it really lacks is detailed instructions for building a traditional old-style underground root cellar. That’s where the next resource comes in.

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Building a Homestead Root Cellar

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Written by a fellow homestead blogger, Buildir
detailed guide that takes you through every ste
root cellar.

Written by people who have actually done it, th
and Brian’s hands-on experience. The couple built a beautiful root cellar on their homestead in Missouri and documented the entire process into an easy-to-follow e-book. (With stunning pictures of their work!)

Their book is 50 pages and covers:

- The basics of how root cellars work and how to safely store produce as well as dry-cured meats.
- How to plan your own root cellar from start to finish.
- Step-by-step instructions on building a root cellar into a hillside, with dozens of photos, covering every step of the process.

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Building a Homestead Root Cellar

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by Brian Thomas &

The Joy of Keeping a Root Cellar

Though The Joy of Keeping a Root Cellar won't tell you how to build one, it will tell you how to stock it with just about every type of preserved food under the sun. The book covers the specifics of:

- Root cellaring different types of fruits and vegetables
- drying foods for the root cellar
- preservation by pickling and natural fermentation
- preserving dairy and eggs

This is a great resource to learn how to keep foods beyond basic produce in your root cellar. Long before you actually build a root cellar, you can begin practicing preservation techniques so you'll know how to fill a cellar when you have one.

Recipes from the Root Cellar

If you're used to popping into town to buy a pineapple in January, a long winter on stored produce can get monotonous unless you know how to make the most of it. Recipes from the Root Cellar has 270 different ways to use up every last potato, beet, cabbage, and turnip in unique and inventive ways.

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Knowing how to cook from the root cellar is just as important as knowing how to stock one. What's the use in keeping all tho
the most of them on your table?

Inside a homestead root cellar. Photo courtesy of Teri Page at Homestead Honey

Charcuterie: The Craft of Salting, Smoking, and Curing

Intimidated by preserving your own meats? Think you'll just stick to root cellared veggies?

I'd challenge you to broaden your horizons. Preserving your own meats can be just as simple (and sometimes easier) than keeping produce fresh. If you've never made your own duck breast prosciutto, you're seriously missing out. You cant even buy that in the store.

I learned how to make duck breast prosciutto from Michael Ruhlman's book, Charcuterie: The Craft of Salting, Smoking, and Curing.

Starting with a whole duck breast, cover it completely with salt for 24 hours. Dust it off, wrap it in cheesecloth, and hang for a few weeks in the root cellar. Done!

Curing your own meats really boosts your ability to provide for your family and adds excitement and depth of flavor to winter meals. There's a reason that the art of charcuterie has survived into the modern age, even after the advent of modern refrigeration. Cured meats just taste better.

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Resources for Building a Homestead Root Cellar

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About Ashley Adamant

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I'm an ol
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Reliance,
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Sarah REPLY

January 26, 2019 at 4:23 pm

We live in Northern Texas, and it's quite humid most of the time (being why I haven't done it yet because of my fear of the harvest possibly molding) can you use an in ground storm cellar for a root cellar? Ours is pretty spacious, and I have no idea how they can get in there unless they come through the ventilation pipe,but I have caught mice and scorpions in it.

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Ashley Adamant

January 29, 2019 at 9:03 pm

For most crops, humid is great for storage. C
of moisture, but others like onions and garlic need dryer storage. It'll depend on what you're storing, and I'd suggest getting the root cellaring book I mentioned above because it has requirements for each crop. It is

very humid here in the summer, but much less so in the winter, so it may not be humid in there year round depending on your climate.

Emma @ Misfit Gardening

REPLY

July 29, 2018 at 8:02 pm

Great post! I've been considering a root cellar for a while and whilst a fancy walk in-built into the bank like a hobbit house isn't quite on the cards for my suburban homestead, I wanted to share options for urban homesteaders that you can have a small root cellar (or two!) by sinking a large drum, barrel or trash can into the ground or if you have a window well, you can convert those to a root cellar as well!

Autumn

REPLY

June 26, 2018 at 4:35 am

Love this Ashley! We are in the middle of drawing out plans for our root cellar. We have Mike & Nancy Bubel's book but it's great to know of other resources as well! What a timely post find for me!

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Cristine Champion

February 1, 2018 at 8:34 pm

Ok, I have a question or two. My husband gc
every year with his buddies. They salt & smoke all the fish, bc its easier to bring home in a cooler box through the airport. My freezer is full. We live

in SLC, Ut & have a freezer in the garage. It's like beef jerky, even unfrozen. Question is: How do we eat it, cook it, consume it. I have tons of cookbooks…normal cookbooks, survival cook books, camping cook books, and all the FOXFIRE homesteading, living off grid books. And still that fish does not get consumed for lack of recipes. Got any for me???

Ashley Adamant REPLY

February 2, 2018 at 1:04 am

I'll admit I'm no expert with fish. I've got you covered with every possible way to cook and eat pork, or even duck, but we very rarely have access to fish. There's a facebook group that would have dozens (if not hundreds) of answers for you though. These people know their wild game:

https://www.facebook.com/groups/huntgathercook/

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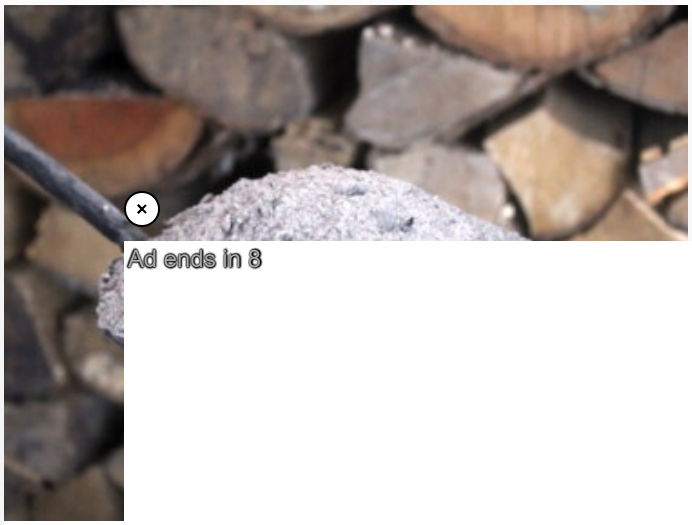

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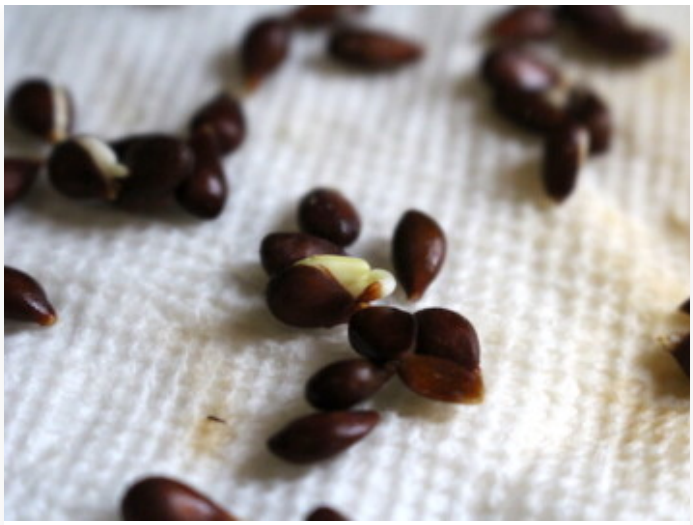

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